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Japan

Agricultural Situation

This Week in Japan

2001

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Report Highlights: GIPSA Meets With MHLW to Discuss StarLink Testing; MAFF Considering Expanding Safeguard Investigation; Industry Requests MAFF Include Test Cost in Price of Corn Sweetener; Domestic Production of Soybeans up over 25%.

Includes PSD changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
Unscheduled Report
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An Update of Major News and Events from the Largest U.S. Agricultural Export Market

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This Week in Japan

- i GIPSA Meets With MHLW to Discuss StarLink Testing:** On January 25-26, officials from the Grain Inspection Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA) met with technicians and policy-makers at the Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare (MHLW) in response to concerns at MHLW about GIPSA's tests of U.S. food corn exports to Japan for the presence of StarLink. To-date, under the U.S.-Japan StarLink test monitoring program, out of 29 samples tested by GIPSA found to be negative for StarLink, three MHLW tests on the same samples generated positive results. After confirming that test procedures in the United States and Japan are mostly consistent, MHLW is now requesting that GIPSA increase the number of kernels tested for each food corn shipment to Japan, in line with FDA recommendations for testing of corn used in U.S. dry milling. (AgAffairs Tokyo)

- i MAFF Considering Expanding Safeguard Investigation:** In response to rising imports and pressure from the Diet, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) and Ministry of Economy Trade and Industry (METI) have indicated that the Government of Japan (GOJ) is considering expanding the investigation on possible safeguard measures for vegetables, seafood, and forest products. The GOJ notified the WTO on December 22, 2000, that it was initiating an investigation on dried shiitake mushrooms, welsh onions, and tatami mats. The following products are now being monitored for possible investigation: garlic, eggplant, wakame seaweed, eel, including processed products, bonito, green onions, fresh shiitake mushrooms, tomatoes, green peppers, dimensioned lumber, and laminated lumber. Based on the outcome of the public investigation and comments regarding the first 3 products, MAFF may recommend safeguard measure, in which case it would notify the WTO. At this time, there is no schedule for the additional products. (AgAffairs Tokyo)

- i Industry Requests MAFF Include Test Cost in Price of Corn Sweetener:** The Japan Starch and Sweeteners Industry Association (JSSIA) requested that MAFF include the StarLink testing cost into the calculation of the "theoretical cost" of corn syrup. The theoretical cost is provided by MAFF quarterly. It is calculated by MAFF with various factors, including as the cost for protection of local potato & sweet potato (so called "adjustment cost"), corn price, exchange rates, and sugar price. StarLink test cost per ton is \$2.5 for IP handled corn and \$4-5 for non-segregated corn. (AgAffairs Tokyo)

- i Domestic Production of Soybeans up over 25%:** Last week, MAFF reported that domestic production of soybeans for CY 2000 was up 26% to 235,000 metric tons (MT). Increased acreage planted accounted for over 13% of the increase, while increased yield accounted for over 11% of the increase. Total Japan imports of soybean in 1999 were 4.88 million metric tons (MMT), of which almost 1.1 MMT were imported for food use. Total imports of U.S. product for CY 1999 were 3.87 million tons, of which over 764,000 are destined for food use. (AgAffairs Tokyo)

Upcoming events: Feb 5: APHIS Nursery Meeting; Feb 6: Future Farmers of America; Feb 9: USAPEEC; Feb 18-20: USWA Board Team 2001 to Asia; Feb 21-Mar 1: Ross Kreamer, Area Officer, FAS/USDA; Mar 2-13: Architecture & Construction Trade Show; Mar 4-7: Compliance Review of USAPEEC; Mar 7-8: GMO Seminar